

HOUSE RESOLUTION 220

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to recognize and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stax Records.

WHEREAS, Memphis is recognized throughout the world as the true home of sweet soul music, and visitors to this great State share with its citizens a common love and respect for the soulful sounds of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, it is thus most appropriate for this General Assembly to honor and recognize the 50th anniversary of the legendary Stax Records, which, founded in Memphis, is the most famous soul music record label with Tennessee roots; and

WHEREAS, in 1959, former country fiddler Jim Stewart, and his sister, Estelle Axton, founded what would, in 1961, become Stax Records; the label's first hit was *Cause I Love You* by Rufus and Carla Thomas; and

WHEREAS, second only to Motown in popular soul music sales and influence during its heyday, Stax Records was nevertheless first in gritty, raw, stripped-down soul; featuring artists like Otis Redding, Rufus & Carla Thomas, Sam & Dave, William Bell, The Bar-Kays, and Isaac Hayes, and with house band Booker T. and the MGs and horn section The Memphis Horns, Stax placed over 167 hit songs in the top 100 on the pop charts and an astounding 243 hits in the top 100 of the R & B charts over the course of fifteen years; and

WHEREAS, the influence of the Stax sound can still be felt over thirty years later in so many musical genres; songs like *Green Onions* by Booker T. and the MGs, *(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay* by Otis Redding, *Soul Man* and *Hold On, I'm Comin'* by Sam and Dave, *I'll Take You There* by the Staple Singers, and *Theme from Shaft* by Isaac Hayes have become part of the popular music vernacular, and they are instantly recognizable to music fans and casual listeners alike; and

WHEREAS, perhaps most vital to the success of Stax Records was the cooperation between white and black musicians and producers, an integration that was practically unprecedented at the time; and

WHEREAS, one of the more under-appreciated talents who helped build the Stax legacy is David Porter, a truly great American soul musician who is perhaps best known as the songwriting partner of Isaac Hayes during the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, as house composers for Stax Records, Mr. Porter and Mr. Hayes penned most of Sam & Dave's electrifying hits, including *Soul Man*, *I Thank You*, *When Something Is Wrong with My Baby*, and *Hold On I'm Comin'*; and

WHEREAS, this Dynamic Duo also wrote material for Carla Thomas (*B-A-B-Y*), Johnnie Taylor (*I Got to Love Somebody's Baby* and *I Had a Dream*), and The Soul Children; and

WHEREAS, during the heyday of their songwriting collaboration at Stax, the Porter-Hayes duo composed an incredible 200 songs; and

WHEREAS, after their partnership ended, David Porter began recording his own albums for Stax; a remake of his *Can't See You When I Want To*, which he originally cut in 1965, became a Top 30 R&B hit for him, and he recorded several albums for Stax in the early '70s, including a concept LP, *Victim of the Joke?*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Porter then began working with songwriting partner Ronnie Williams, and later went on to engineer the relaunch of the Stax label; and

WHEREAS, this innovative icon of soul music received his just desserts when was honored with a Pioneer Award from the Rhythm and Blues Foundation in 1999; and

WHEREAS, David Porter received the ultimate honor available to a tunesmith when he was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame on June 9, 2005, alongside such luminaries as Bill Withers, Steve Cropper, Robert B. Sherman, Richard M. Sherman, John Fogerty, and his longtime writing partner, Isaac Hayes; and

WHEREAS, through these many years, the Stax legacy has remained strong, for though its spirit was beset by the blows of circumstance, including bankruptcy in 1975, the dedicated fans of soul music, Stax-style, have kept its heartbeat alive by continuing to believe in the power of the music; and

WHEREAS, today, the label's current owners, Concord Records, are continuing the Stax legacy by remaining true to the spirit and sounds of Stax; since purchasing the label in 2004, Concord Records has reactivated Stax to release new recordings, while continuing to reissue classic material; and

WHEREAS, in May 2003, the Stax Museum celebrated its Grand Opening in Memphis and has since remained faithful to its mission of preserving the iconic music that was created within the walls of the Stax Records recording studios and continuing the proud Stax legacy; and

WHEREAS, the potent influence of the soulful sounds of Stax continues to be felt worldwide, as visitors from across the nation and the globe journey to Memphis to visit the Stax Museum, a standing monument to some of the greatest rhythm and blues and soul music ever created; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly wishes to pay tribute to this homegrown legend on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and congratulate the label's management, employees, artists, musicians, and fans as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stax Records, purveyors of the finest in soul music from Memphis and beyond. We wish these fine folks much continued success in bringing artistic excellence to music lovers everywhere.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we salute David Porter for his many great compositions of rhythm and blues and soul music and praise his instrumental work in building and reestablishing the proud legacy that is Stax Records as a songwriter, musician, and recording artist.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.